

establishing a time limit within which to forward the packet stored in the memory to the network;

monitoring an elapsed period of time while attempting to forward the packet stored in the memory to the network; and

canceling said attempting to forward the packet stored in the memory to the network, and replacing the packet stored in memory with a new packet when the elapsed period of time exceeds the time limit.

~~Claim 2 has been canceled without prejudice.~~

Claim 3 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

3. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of allowing transmission of the packet stored in the memory to complete when that packet is currently being transmitted over the network.

Claim 4 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

4. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of interrupting transmission of the packet stored in the memory when that packet is currently being transmitted over the network.

Claim 5 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

5. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of resetting a timer to allow

additional attempts to forward the packet stored in the memory when that packet is not currently being transmitted over the network.

Claim 6 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein: said new packet includes the same data as the replaced packet when it is determined to cancel the forwarding of the stored packet.

Claim 7 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein: said new packet includes different data than the replaced packet when it is determined to cancel the forwarding of the stored packet.

Claim 8 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein the packet stored in memory includes time-sensitive data and protocol-related data, and the new packet has the same time-sensitive data and different protocol-related data as the replaced packet.

Claim 9 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

9. The method of claim 8 further comprising the steps of:

resetting a back-off level; and

attempting to forward the new packet to the network.

Claim 10 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

10. The method of claim 8 further comprising the steps of:

initiating attempts to transmit the new packet to the network; and  
resetting the elapsed period of time.

Claim 11 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

11. The method of claim 8 wherein the packet stored in memory includes time-sensitive data and the step of replacing the packet stored in memory with a new packet can occur a predetermined maximum number of times.

Claim 12 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

12. The method of claim 7 wherein the packet stored in memory includes time-sensitive data and protocol-related data, and the new packet has different time-sensitive data and the same protocol-related data as the replaced packet.

Claim 13 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

13. The method of Claim 1 wherein the steps of monitoring, establishing the time limit, and determining whether to cancel forwarding the packet stored in memory occur only when the packet stored in the memory includes time-sensitive data.

~~Please cancel claim 14 without prejudice.~~

Please replace claim 15 as follows.

15. (Amended) A method for forwarding packets to a network, the method comprising  
the steps of:

providing a packet forwarding system with a memory, said packet forwarding system  
being connected to the network;

5 creating a first packet at the packet forwarding system and storing said first packet in  
said memory of said packet forwarding system;

attempting to forward said first packet stored in said memory to the network;

establishing a time limit within which to forward said first packet stored in said memory  
to the network;

10 monitoring an elapsed period of time during said attempting to forward said first packet  
stored in said memory to the network;

canceling said attempting to forward said first packet stored in said memory to the  
network when said elapsed period of time exceeds said time limit and said first packet has not  
been forwarded;

15 creating a second packet at said packet forwarding system after said creating of said first  
packet, said creating of said second packet including combining data of said first packet with  
additional data to create data for said second packet;

replacing said first packet in said memory with said second packet after said canceling;  
attempting to forward said second packet to the network after said replacing.

~~Please cancel claim 16 without prejudice.~~

~~Please replace claim 17 as follows.~~

~~17~~ ~~17. (Amended) A method in accordance with claim 16, further comprising:~~

establishing a time limit within which to forward said second packet stored in said memory to the network;

monitoring an elapsed period of time during said attempting to forward said second packet stored in said memory to the network;

canceling said attempting to forward said second packet stored in said memory to the network when said elapsed period of time exceeds said time limit and said second packet has not been forwarded;

creating a third packet at said packet forwarding system, said creating of said third packet includes combining data of said second packet with additional data to create data for said third packet;

replacing said second packet in said memory with said third packet after said canceling; attempting to forward said third packet to the network after said replacing.

Claim 18 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

18. A method in accordance with claim 17, further comprising:

limiting a number of steps of said combining of data from a previous packet with additional data to below a predetermined retry maximum.

Claim 19 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

19. A method in accordance with claim 15, further comprising:  
finishing forwarding said first packet if said first packet is being forwarded when said  
elapsed period of time exceeds said time limit.

Claim 20 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

20. A method in accordance with claim 15, further comprising:  
interrupting forwarding said first packet if said first packet is being forwarded when said  
elapsed period of time exceeds said time limit.

Claim 21 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

21. A method in accordance with claim 15, wherein:  
said creating of said second packet includes creating new data for said second packet.

Claim 22 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

22. A method in accordance with claim 15, wherein:  
said steps of monitoring, establishing said time limit, and canceling forwarding of said  
first packet occur only when said first packet includes time-sensitive data.

Claim 23 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

23. A method in accordance with claim 15, wherein:

said creating of said first packet is performed using local audio as a data portion of the  
packet.

*Please cancel claim 24 without prejudice.*

*Please replace claim 25 as follows.*

25. (Amended) A method in accordance with claim 32, wherein:  
said forwarding of said workstation packets to the network is interrupted during said  
attempting to forward said first packet to the network.

Claim 26 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

26. A method in accordance with claim 25, wherein:  
said creating of said first packet is performed using local audio as a data portion of the  
packet;  
said creating of said second packet includes combining data of said first packet with  
5 additional local audio to create data for said second packet.

Claim 27 has not been changed by this amendment and remains as follows.

27. A method in accordance with claim 15, wherein:  
said attempting includes waiting for a free period on the network and forwarding said  
first packet to the network during a first said free period.

Please cancel claim 28 without prejudice and add the following new claims.

29. (New) A method in accordance with claim 15, further comprising:  
receiving another packet at said packet forwarding system from another network, said  
network and said another network having separate collision domains.
30. (New) A method in accordance with claim 1, further comprising:  
receiving another packet at said packet forwarding system from another network, said  
network and said another network having separate collision domains.
31. (New) A method for forwarding packets to a network, comprising the steps of:  
providing a packet forwarding system with a memory, said packet forwarding system  
being connected to the network;  
5 creating a packet at the packet forwarding system and storing the packet in the memory  
of the packet forwarding system, said creating of the packet being performed using local audio  
as a data portion of the packet;  
attempting to forward the packet stored in the memory to the network;  
establishing a time limit within which to forward the packet stored in the memory to the  
network;  
10 monitoring an elapsed period of time while attempting to forward the packet stored in  
the memory to the network; and

cancelling said attempting to forward the packet stored in the memory to the network, and replacing the packet stored in memory with a new packet when the elapsed period of time exceeds the time limit.

32. (New) A method for forwarding packets to a network, the method comprising the steps of:

providing a packet forwarding system with a memory, said packet forwarding system being connected to the network;

creating a first packet at the packet forwarding system and storing said first packet in said memory of said packet forwarding system;

attempting to forward said first packet stored in said memory to the network;

establishing a time limit within which to forward said first packet stored in said memory to the network;

monitoring an elapsed period of time during said attempting to forward said first packet stored in said memory to the network;

cancelling said attempting to forward said first packet stored in said memory to the network when said elapsed period of time exceeds said time limit and said first packet has not been forwarded;

15 creating a second packet at said packet forwarding system after said creating of said first packet;

replacing said first packet in said memory with said second packet after said cancelling;